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EXAMINER

DSOUZA, JOSEPH FRANCIS A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2611

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/730,055	Applicant(s) DEAS ET AL.	
	Examiner ADOLF DSOUZA	Art Unit 2611	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 October 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 9, 11 - 14, 17 - 30, 35 - 39 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 4, 6 - 9, 11 - 14, 17 - 30, 35 - 39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5, 22 - 30 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 1 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant amended claim 1 to add a new limitation and then argued that the prior art does not disclose this limitation. Examiner is introducing a new reference Thomasson (US 6,278,785) to address this limitation.

Priority

2. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 39 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as not falling within one of the four statutory categories of invention. While the claims recite a series of steps or acts to be performed, a statutory "process" under 35 U.S.C. 101 must (1) be tied to another statutory category (such as a particular apparatus), or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or material) to a different state or thing. The instant claims, such as independent claim 39, do not positively tie to another statutory category (such as a particular apparatus) that accomplishes the claimed method steps, and therefore

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do not qualify as a statutory process. In claim 39, there is no apparatus disclosed that performs the method steps.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1, 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785).

Regarding claim 1, AAPA discloses an integrated circuit (Fig. 3 prior art) comprising:

a transmitter to transmit a first signal to another integrated circuit, wherein the transmitter has a transmitter buffer including a transmitter buffer output and a transmitter buffer input (Fig. 3, Die A, element 12; wherein the transmitter is on Die A transmitting a first signal via path 30 and 31 to Die B and the transmitter buffer is element 12);

a receiver to receive a second signal from the other integrated circuit, wherein the receiver has a receiver buffer including a receiver buffer output and

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a receiver buffer input, and wherein the receiver buffer input coupled to the transmitter buffer output (Fig. 3, Die A receiver which receives a signal from Die B; receiver buffer 13 which is coupled to transmitter buffer 12).

AAPA does not disclose a differential buffer coupled between the transmitter buffer input and the receiver buffer output, where the buffer adjusts the third signal in amplitude and phase.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Schneider discloses:

a path coupled between the transmitter and the receiver (signal path from output of “precoder” through “echo canceller” to output of the “front end”);

a third signal from the input of the transmitter and to adjust the third signal in phase and amplitude to cancel the first signal at the output of the receiver buffer (signal path from output of “precoder” through “echo canceller” to output of the “front end”; Fig. 4, element “echo canceller” and output of the “front end”; column 8, lines 19 – 26; column 1, line 59 – column 2, line 19; wherein the third signal phase and amplitude being adjusted is interpreted as being done by the echo canceller);

Schneider’s system uses a conventional echo canceller, while AAPA uses differential signals. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use differential buffers, in place of the echo canceller in Schneider’s system, because this would allow the echo canceller to be implemented using differential buffers to perform echo cancellation in AAPA’s system.

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In the same field of endeavor, however, Thomasson discloses a training circuit to set phase and amplitude characteristics of the differential buffer by determining which phase and amplitude characteristics minimize peak-to-peak noise at the receiver buffer output upon introduction of a training signal to the transmitter (Abstract; Fig 1; column 3, line 60 – column 5, line 50; wherein the minimization of peak-to-peak noise is done since Thomason's method tries to cancel out the echo by amplitude adjusting, inverting, and phase adjusting. It is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that these operations themselves would lead to the peak signal being minimized, even though Thomason may not explicitly say so).

Regarding claim 17, AAPA not disclose the finite state machine plus ADC generates a control voltage to vary the amplitude of the third signal.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Thomasson discloses the finite state machine and an analog to digital converter to provide a control voltage to the differential buffer to vary the amplitude of the third signal (Fig. 1, element 41, output of element 42; column 2, lines 17 – 21; wherein the control voltage is interpreted as output of the subtractor 42 that is fed back to change the variable attenuator 41 which changes the amplitude of the echo replica signal).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Thomasson, in the system of

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AAPA because this would allow the amplitude of the echo replica signal to be controlled for echo cancellation, as is well known in the art.

Claim 35 is directed to method/steps of the same subject matter claimed in apparatus claim 1 and therefore, is rejected as explained in the rejection of claim 1 above.

6. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785) and Geist (US 6,362,672).

Regarding claim 2, AAPA does not disclose that the third signal is adjusted in rise time.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Geist discloses the third signal is further adjusted in rise time (Abstract; Fig. 3; column 3, lines 36 – 51; wherein the third signal is interpreted as the signal A#40 that is adjusted to match the slope of the other signal).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Geist, in the system of AAPA because it would enable the two signals to be synchronized, thereby eliminating any off center crossing voltages, as disclosed by Geist (column 1, lines 32 – 45).

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7. Claims 4, 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785) and Adham et al. (US 6,100,716).

Regarding claim 4, AAPA does not disclose that the differential buffer is implemented as a chain of buffer stages.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Adham discloses the differential buffer is implemented as a chain of buffer stages (Fig. 5A; column 9, lines 7 – 21).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Adham, in the system of AAPA because this would allow the degraded signals to be restored after a few logic stages, as stated by Adham.

Regarding claim 6, AAPA does not disclose that the differential buffer has a variable current source.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Adham discloses the differential buffer has a variable current source for the purpose of setting the amplitude or phase of the third signal (column 5, line 59 – 67; column 6, lines 6 – 25; wherein setting the amplitude is interpreted as changing the voltage drop across the resistor).

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Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Adham, in the system of AAPA because this would allow the output to be calculated utilizing the benefits of a differential buffer, namely reducing crosstalk, having a high SNR, as stated by Adham (column 6, lines 39 – 47).

8. Claims 3, 7, 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785) and Chang et al. (A CMOS Differential Buffer Amplifier with Accurate Gain and Clipping Control; July 1995, IEEE Journal of Solid State Circuits; pages 731 – 735).

Regarding claims 3, 7, AAPA does not disclose that the gain of the differential buffer is varied by a finite state machine.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Chang discloses the programmable or variable load is set by means of a finite state machine to control amplitude or phase (page 731, 2nd column, 6 lines starting with “However, for modern digital telephone applications, ...”; wherein the finite state machine that controls the gain is interpreted as the external gain control).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Chang, in the system of AAPA

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because allowing the gain to be externally controlled would allow greater flexibility, as is well known in the art.

Regarding claim 38, AAPA does not disclose that the gain of the differential buffer is varied by a training pattern.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Chang discloses the gain of the differential buffer is varied by means of a finite state machine (page 731, 2nd column, 6 lines starting with “However, for modern digital telephone applications, ...”; wherein the finite state machine that controls the gain is interpreted as the external gain control).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Chang, in the system of AAPA because allowing the gain to be externally controlled would allow greater flexibility, as is well known in the art.

9. Claims 8, 11, 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573), and Geist (US 6,362,672).

Regarding claim 8, AAPA does not disclose a coarse delay circuit, a fine delay circuit, an amplitude control circuit and a rise-time control circuit.

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In the same field of endeavor, however, Moore discloses a coarse delay circuit and a fine delay circuit (Abstract; Fig. 1, elements 11, 12; column 1, lines 10 – 21; column 2, lines 5 – 21, 44 – 50).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Moore, in the system of AAPA because this would provide a means for adjusting the delay for echo cancellation, as disclosed by Moore (column 1, lines 10 – 21).

In the same field of endeavor, however, Thomasson discloses an amplitude control circuit (Abstract; Fig. 1, element 41; column 3, lines 60 – 65; column 5, lines 24 – 33).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Thomasson, in the system of AAPA because this would provide a means for adjusting the amplitude of the echo replica for echo cancellation, as disclosed by Thomasson.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Geist discloses a rise-time control circuit (Abstract; Fig. 3; column 1, lines 5 – 8; column 3, lines 36 – 51).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Geist, in the system of AAPA because it would enable the two signals to be synchronized, thereby eliminating any off center crossing voltages, as disclosed by Geist (column 1, lines 32 – 45).

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Regarding claim 11, AAPA does not disclose a coarse delay circuit comprising a digital delay line and control logic.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Moore discloses coarse delay circuit comprises digital delay line and control logic for controlling the multiplexers (Fig. 2; column 2, lines 51 – 67; wherein the control logic for controlling the multiplexers is interpreted as the control logic for the write pointer 16 and read pointer r_n).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Moore, in the system of AAPA because it would enable the delay to be controlled.

Regarding claim 20, AAPA does not disclose the rise time control circuit comprises resistors, capacitors and switches.

In the same field of endeavor, Geist discloses the rise time control circuit comprises resistors, capacitors and switches (Abstract; Fig. 3, 5; column 3, lines 36 – 51; wherein the resistors and capacitors are as shown in Fig. 5).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Geist, in the system of AAPA because this would provide a means for matching the rise times in the two signals.

10. Claims 9, 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and

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further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573) (US 6,278,785), Geist (US 6,362,672) and Bellenger (US 6,320,867).

Regarding claim 9, AAPA does not disclose that during a calibration procedure the amplitude, phase and rise-time are adjusted during power or on request.

In the same field of endeavor, Bellenger discloses the phase and/or amplitude of the third signal is adjusted during a calibration procedure (column 27, lines 59 – column 29, line 3; wherein the third signal is interpreted as the echo replica, adjusting the phase/amplitude is interpreted obtaining the echo canceller coefficients using the training sequence).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Bellenger, in the system of Schneider because this would provide a means for training the echo canceller, as is well known in the art.

Regarding claim 14, AAPA does not disclose a finite state machine generates control signals from the digital delay line.

In the same field of endeavor, Moore discloses a finite state machine generates control signals to select the signals from the digital delay line in the coarse delay circuit varying the delay of the third signal with respect to the first signal (Fig. 2, elements 16 and r_n ;

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column 2, lines 51 – 67; wherein the controls signals that are generated to select delays from the delay line are interpreted as the read and write pointers).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Moore, in the system of AAPA because this would provide a means for selecting signals from the delay line.

11. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573), and Geist (US 6,362,672) and Saeki (US 20020070783).

Regarding claim 12, the AAPA does not disclose that the digital delay line comprises a cascade of buffers.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Saeki discloses the digital delay line comprises a cascade of buffers (Fig. 18, element 14; page 1, paragraph 3).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Saeki, in the combined system described above because this would provide a means for storage of the signal, as is well known in the art.

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12. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573), and Geist (US 6,362,672) and Nourrcier (US 5,278,567).

Regarding claim 13, AAPA does not disclose a pair of multiplexers selects signals from a digital delay line.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Nourrcier discloses a pair of multiplexers selects signals from a digital delay line (Fig. 7; column 9, line 67 – column 10, line 24)..

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Nourrcier, in the system of AAPA because this would provide selecting the delay line signal, as is well known in the art.

13. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573), and Geist (US 6,362,672) and Filliman et. al. (US 6,404,255).

Regarding claim 18, the AAPA does not disclose the amplitude control circuit comprises a buffer with variable load.

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In the same field of endeavor, however, Filliman discloses the amplitude control circuit comprises a buffer with variable load (Fig. 7; column 6, line 42 – column 7, line 8).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Filliman, in the system of AAPA because this would allow the amplitude of the echo replica signal to be controlled for echo cancellation, as is well known in the art.

14. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573), and Geist (US 6,362,672) and Filliman et. al. (US 6,404,255) and Marbot (US 5,334,891).

Regarding claim 19, AAPA does not disclose the transistors are NMOS transistors.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Marbot discloses the finite state machine is configured to control a gate voltage of an NMOS transistor to vary the variable load (Fig. 1; column 2, lines 10 – column 3, line 14).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the NMOS transistors, as taught by Marbot, in the system of AAPA because this would result in low power consumption, as is well known in the art.

15. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereafter, AAPA) in view of Schneider (US 6,246,716) and further in view of Thomasson (US 6,278,785), Moore et al. (US 6,166,573) (US 6,278,785), Geist (US 6,362,672), Bellenger (US 6,320,867) and Julstrom (US 4,991,166).

Regarding claim 21, AAPA does not disclose that the rise time is controlled by the capacitor.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Julstrom discloses a finite state machine generates control signals to switch the capacitors in the rise-time control circuit varying the rise-time of the third signal (column 9, lines 49 – 63; wherein the rise time is controlled by the capacitors).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Julstrom, in the combined system because this would allow the rise time to be adjusted.

16. Claims 39 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomasson (US 6,278,785) in view Minami US (4,977,551).

Regarding claim 39, Thomasson discloses:

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applying a training pattern to an input of a transmitter and determining a code that corresponds to a minimum noise condition; (Abstract; Fig 1; column 3, line 60 – column 5, line 50; wherein the minimization of peak-to-peak noise is done since Thomason's method tries to cancel out the echo by amplitude adjusting, inverting, and phase adjusting. It is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that these operations themselves would lead to the peak signal being minimized, even though Thomason may not explicitly say so).

Thomasson doesn't disclose applying a code to a DAC.

In the same field of endeavor, however, Minami discloses varying a digital-to-analog code being applied to a digital-to-analog converter to adjust operating parameters of a differential buffer; measuring resulting noise conditions at an output buffer of a receiver coupled to an input buffer of the transmitter, wherein the noise conditions correspond to each applied digital-to- analog code; determining digital to analog code that corresponds to a minimum noise condition; applying the determined code to the digital to analog converter to calibrate the differential buffer.

(column 2, lines 35 – 49; Fig. 9).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Minami, in the system of Thomasson because it would enable the optimum amplitude and phase settings to be determined.

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17. Claims 35 – 36, 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomasson (US 6,278,785) in view Minami US (4,977,551) and further in view of AAPA.

Regarding claim 35, Thomasson discloses adjusting, via the differential buffer, the third signal in phase and amplitude; and coupling the adjusted third signal into the output buffer of the receiver to cancel a signal echo component of the second signal (Abstract; Fig 1; column 3, line 60 – column 5, line 50; wherein the minimization of peak-to-peak noise is done since Thomason's method tries to cancel out the echo by amplitude adjusting, inverting, and phase adjusting. It is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that these operations themselves would lead to the peak signal being minimized, even though Thomason may not explicitly say so).

Thomasson does not disclose transmitting a first signal from the output buffer of the transmitter to another circuit, wherein the first signal being is also coupled into an input buffer of the receiver; receiving a second signal from the other circuit; transmitting a third signal from the input buffer of the transmitter through the differential buffer.

In the same field of endeavor, however, AAPA discloses a first signal from the output buffer of the transmitter to another circuit, wherein the first signal being is also coupled into an input buffer of the receiver; receiving a second signal from the other circuit; transmitting a third signal from the input buffer of the transmitter through the differential buffer (Fig. 3 prior art; Fig. 3, Die A, element 12; wherein the transmitter is on Die A

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transmitting a first signal via path 30 and 31 to Die B and the transmitter buffer is element 12; Fig. 3, Die A receiver which receives a signal from Die B; receiver buffer 13 which is coupled to transmitter buffer 12).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by AAPA, in the system of Thomasson because it would enable the echo to be cancelled.

Regarding claim 36, Thomasson discloses that the phase of the echo replica is opposite to the phase of the leakage signal (Abstract; Fig 1; column 3, line 60 – column 5, line 50; Thomason's method tries to cancel out the echo by amplitude adjusting, inverting, and phase adjusting).

Regarding claim 38, Thomasson discloses a gain property of the differential buffer is varied at least in part by using a training pattern (Abstract; Fig 1; column 3, line 60 – column 5, line 50; wherein the gain is set using the coarse and fine adjustments. The coarse and fine adjustments are interpreted as the training pattern).

18. Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomasson (US 6,278,785) in view Minami US (4,977,551) and further in view of AAPA and Geist (US 6,362,672).

Regarding claim 37, Thomasson does not disclose that the rise time of the third signal is adjusted to match the rise time of the first signal.

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In the same field of endeavor, however, Geist discloses the rise time of the third signal applied to the output of the receiving buffer is adjusted to match the rise time of the first signal (Abstract; Fig. 3; column 3, lines 36 – 51; wherein the third signal is interpreted as the signal A#40 that is adjusted to match the slope of the other signal).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to use the method, as taught by Geist, in the system of Thomasson because it would enable the two signals to be synchronized, thereby eliminating any off center crossing voltages, as disclosed by Geist (column 1, lines 32 – 45).

Allowable Subject Matter

19. Claims 5, 22 – 30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Other Prior Art Cited

20. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the applicant's disclosure.

The following patents are cited to further show the state of the art with respect to echo cancellation and differential buffers/amplifiers:

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Guidoux (US 4,621,173) discloses a method to reduce the convergence time of an echo canceller.

Ito et al. (US 5,450,457) discloses a sampling phase extracting circuit and echo canceller.

Mellado et al. (US 5,796,731) discloses multiline PCM interface for signal processing.

Shattil (US 20010019264) discloses a method and apparatus for a full-duplex electromagnetic transceiver

Conclusion

21. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Contact Information

22. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ADOLF DSOUZA whose telephone number is (571)272-1043. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Payne can be reached on 571-272-3024. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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